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Chairman: Mr. Wolfe ..... (Jamaica)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 62: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/62/122 and 168; A/62/71-E/2007/46 and A/C.3/62/L.10)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.10: Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Belarus had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. The outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly had focused on the three main pillars for social development, namely, poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration. More than a decade after the World Summit, much needed to be done in order to realize the goals and commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action.

2. The text of the draft resolution maintained a balance between the three pillars. However, because of the focus of the Commission for Social Development during the 2007-2008 biennium under the theme "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", the draft resolution also highlighted the need for devising strategies to generate full and productive employment for all in order to create an environment conducive to sustainable development.

3. The draft resolution mainly built on the elements agreed in resolution 61/141, adopted by the General Assembly during its sixty-first session; it also drew on language from the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2006 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the theme of productive employment and decent work for all. Some important recommendations from the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/62/122 on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly had also been incorporated into the draft resolution.

4. **The Chairman** said that Armenia had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/62/61-E/2007/7, A/62/61/Add.1-E/2007/7/Add.1, A/62/132, 154, 157 and A/C.3/62/L.8)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.8: Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond

5. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Belarus had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. The overall objective of the draft resolution was to ensure that the mandated objectives of the International Year of the Family received the attention they deserved at all levels in order to develop firm measures and approaches to address national priorities for the family as an institution. The current text was based on General Assembly resolution 60/133.

6. The specific intention of the draft resolution was to focus on one of the mandated objectives of the International Year of the Family, to strengthen the capacity of national mechanisms and institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families. The Group of 77 and China believed that capacity development was a vital element for the effective implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family, at both the national and regional levels.

7. **The Chairman** said that the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/62/131 and A/C.3/62/L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.9: Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

8. **Ms. Nawaz** (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Belarus had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. While building on the language used in General Assembly resolutions 60/135 and 61/142 and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the

draft resolution focused on the process of the first global cycle of review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, initiated by the Commission for Social Development in 2007.

9. The draft resolution incorporated suggestions from the report of the Secretary-General on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/62/131). It also placed emphasis on building capacity to eradicate poverty among older persons, the inclusion of ageing-specific and ageing-mainstreaming efforts in States' review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action and active participation by States in the bottom-up approach of the review and appraisal through sharing ideas, data collection and best practices.

10. **The Chairman** said that the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/62/126-7 and 84; A/C.3/62/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.11: United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

11. **Mr. Babadoudou** (Benin), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that Belarus had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. The current draft updated General Assembly resolution 61/182, but the fifth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 2, 5 and 8 introduced new elements, building on previous resolutions of the General Assembly.

12. **The Chairman** said that Belarus wished to join in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Agenda item 107: International drug control (*continued*) (A/62/117 and A/C.3/62/L.13)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.13: International cooperation against the world drug problem

13. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that Argentina, Andorra, Belarus, Croatia, Colombia, Honduras, Jordan, Jamaica, Monaco, the Republic of Tanzania and Sudan had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Welcoming the decision by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to convene a high-level segment to assess the implementation of the declaration and the measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, the draft resolution identified the obstacles still facing the international community in its efforts to confront the world drug problem.

14. **The Chairman** said that Armenia, Botswana, Bolivia, Chile, China, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran, Mali, Moldova, Montenegro, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, San Marino, Senegal, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Zambia also wished to join in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/62/84 and A/62/126-7 and A/C.3/62/L.2 and L.3)

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.2: Technical assistance for implementing the internationa' conventions and protocols relating to terrorism

15. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

16. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that, in order to implement the activities requested by paragraphs 1 to 6 of the draft resolution, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) would need to undertake an increased level of technical assistance to countries requesting such assistance and conduct a number of specialized training sessions. UNODC would also be required to cover in-depth increased substantive elements in the overall counter-terrorism programme of activities; elaborate an increased number of specialized technical tools and publications, and ensure the inclusion, in its technical assistance activities in counter-terrorism, of elements necessary for building national capacity in order to strengthen criminal justice systems and the rule of law. Furthermore, it would also coordinate the expanded work with CTC/CTED; and (vi) coordinate and cooperate with partner entities at international, regional and subregional levels.

17. The requests made in paragraphs 1 to 6 of the draft resolution would require an increase in the level of technical assistance provided in order to implement the international conventions and protocols related to terrorism, as well as an increase in the level of

voluntary contributions for that purpose. He recalled that in 2006 voluntary contributions received for activities related to the Terrorism Prevention Branch had amounted to $6.1 million. The extrabudgetary requirements for 2007 were estimated at $8 million. Consequently, if the General Assembly adopted draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.2, the implementation of the activities set out in paragraphs 1 to 6 of the draft resolution would be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

18. With regard to the provisions of paragraph 8, he pointed out that the proposed programme budget for the 2008-2009 biennium, under section 16 on international drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice, amounted to $33,615,000 at 2006-2007 rates, representing an increase of $776,600, or 2.4 per cent as compared to the 2006-2007 biennium. The proposal reflected the establishment of a P-3 post in the Terrorism Prevention Branch.

19. He drew attention to the provisions of section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, which reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with the responsibility for administrative and budgetary matters, and also reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in that regard. He also drew attention to paragraph 67 of the first report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for 2000-2001 (A/54/7), which stated that the use of the phrase "within existing resources" or similar language in resolutions had a negative impact on the implementation of activities. Efforts should therefore be made to avoid the use of that phrase in resolutions and decisions.

20. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.2 without a vote.

21. *It was so decided.*

22. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan) said that although his delegation had joined the consensus, he wished to make some observations about the draft resolution. The fifth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution appeared to create a new "technical assistance" mandate for the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. In the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Task Force already had a mandate to ensure coordination and coherence within the United Nations system but did not have a mandate to provide technical assistance to Member States. His delegation could therefore not support the granting of that mandate to the Task Force.

23. In paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was asked to provide technical assistance in close consultation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate. UNODC was guided in its work by the General Assembly and had a clear mandate. Similar references were made in paragraphs 4 and 6 of the draft resolution. His delegation did not believe that the Executive Directorate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTED) should play a subservient role to UNODC, and therefore wished to reserve its position on those paragraphs.

24. In the eighth line of paragraph 5, UNODC was given an additional mandate to take into account programmes for building national capacity. Overall national capacity-building was a State responsibility. UNODC could indeed contribute to national needs as and when requested to do so by States, but it did not have a mandate to formulate or implement an overarching national capacity-building strategy.

25. Line 6 of paragraph 6 also created a doubt as to how UNODC could enhance legal cooperation among States, when such subjects fell within the domain of States themselves. UNODC could provide technical assistance, and it would be preferable to add the word "through" before "good" in the sixth line.

26. Paragraph 8 requested the Secretary-General to provide sufficient resources to UNODC for its activities. His delegation hoped that such a request would not be tantamount to a blank check for UNODC activities, and would not be binding on the Fifth Committee when it considered budgetary implications for UNODC. Pakistan took it that the report requested in paragraph 10 of the draft resolution would not represent a substitute for the requests made to the Secretary-General in paragraph 3 (c) of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy contained in General Assembly resolution 60/288.

Draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.3: Follow-up to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

27. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that the resources required to provide for (i) assistance with the preparation and servicing of the preparatory meetings of the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; (ii) specialized expertise to prepare technical research papers on the four substantive agenda items of the Twelfth Congress; (iii) participation of the least developed countries in the regional preparatory meetings for the Twelfth Congress; and (iv) the travel of staff to provide substantive servicing for the four regional preparatory meetings of the Twelfth Congress had been included in the proposed programme budget for the 2008-2009 biennium.

28. **Ms. Maierá** (Brazil) said that the Government of Brazil had offered to host the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2010, and that the Permanent Mission of Brazil intended to send an official communication to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in that regard. Her delegation would highly appreciate the support of the members of the Third Committee for her Government's offer.

29. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that following consultations with the delegation of Brazil on the issue of the Twelfth Congress, which the Governments of both Brazil and Qatar had proposed to host in 2010, her delegation had agreed to support the offer made by the Government of Brazil. At the same time, the Government of Brazil had agreed to support the Government of Qatar's invitation to host the third session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

30. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), pursuant to the offer made by the delegation of Brazil, proposed that the square brackets in the first line of paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.3 should be deleted and replaced by the name of Brazil.

31. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution contained in A/C.3/62/L.3, as orally revised, without a vote.

32. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/62/297 and 319 and A/C.3/62/2)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/62/182, 209 and 228)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/62/259)

33. **Mr. Muburi-Muita** (Kenya) said that his delegation was committed to the objectives and principles set forth in the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly. Investing in and respecting the rights of children was the foundation for sustainable and equitable development, poverty eradication and peace and security. Kenya had been among the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols and was actively incorporating them into its national legislation. It had also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. It had enacted legislation for the protection of children from sexual abuse in 2006. His Government realized that Kenyan society retained certain customary practices which relegated children to secondary status in decision-making, even in matters which affected them, and that those practices were an impediment to the full realization of their rights. The Government had made deliberate efforts to raise awareness of children's rights and children's fundamental role in shaping the nation's future.

34. The Government was determined to provide universal, decent and affordable health care. Its national reproductive health strategy continued to provide a framework for the promotion of safe motherhood and child survival, including free health services at public health institutions for all children under five. Kenya had also adopted a national health plan which integrated the Millennium Development Goals. The provision of treated mosquito nets, public health initiatives and more medical facilities and personnel had resulted in a significant decline in the rate of child and maternal mortality caused by malaria. Kenya's most dramatic success in achieving the Goals and the principles and objectives of a world fit for

children had been in the area of education. The introduction of universal free primary education in 2003 had resulted in an increase in enrolment in primary school of about 2 million children. Nevertheless, the Government was working to enrol more than 1 million children of school-going age who remained out of school, including through the establishment of boarding and mobile primary schools among the pastoralist communities, the integration of informal schools into the educational system and the introduction of school meal programmes.

35. The ravages of poverty and of HIV/AIDS had resulted in high numbers of orphaned and other vulnerable children. The Government had adopted a national policy and plan of action on orphans and vulnerable children which provided a framework for improving the plight of disadvantaged children. Kenya believed that global collaboration was essential for the promotion of the well-being of children, without which the ideals of universal peace and security, the ultimate challenge of the international community, could not be achieved.

36. **Ms. Cavaliere de Nava** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her Government gave top priority to the best interests of children. The Government had recognized children and adolescents as persons having rights which must be safeguarded by the State, the family and society and was undertaking reform to strengthen the protection of those rights. It had also brought its domestic legislation into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its national policy to promote and protect the rights of children and adolescents included comprehensive family support for low-income households and working mothers, school nutrition programmes, vaccination drives, school enrolment and preschool education programmes, birth registration campaigns and measures to combat sexual abuse. The Government recognized that children who lived in poverty were unable to exercise their rights and participate as fully fledged members of society. It was therefore committed to eliminating the structural causes of poverty, inequity and violence and of the violation of the human rights of children and adolescents.

37. Venezuela condemned all forms of violence against children and adolescents and the use of children in armed conflict and had become a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols. It had also ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would continue to work to promote the rights of children and adolescents and ensure that they benefited from an inclusive society based on justice, solidarity and equality.

38. **Mr. Myint** (Myanmar) said that despite progress made and the high number of national plans of action and goals worldwide, aid flows had not reached a level which would enable States to invest more in children. The international community must therefore give the issue greater attention. His Government had been making progress towards reducing the under-five mortality rate since 1990. Under its five-year plan, it was making strenuous efforts to improve child health and hoped to reduce the rate by two thirds by 2015. It was currently expanding immunization coverage in cooperation with the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Maternal mortality remained a problem in Myanmar. The Government had therefore expanded safe motherhood initiatives and provided for essential obstetrical care, with an emphasis on antenatal care. It had also made concerted efforts to increase access to primary education and to promote the retention rate. Net enrolment in and the proportion of pupils completing primary school had increased sharply between 1990 and 2005.

39. The report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/62/209) had raised global awareness of the problem. The appointment of a Special Representative to provide high-level leadership in implementing the recommendation set forth in the report would be a step in the right direction. Violence against children was not condoned by any religion. In Myanmar, all strata of society expressed aversion to violence against children. The report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/62/228) had also drawn the attention of the international community to the use of children in conflict situations. His Government had worked with the Special Representative during her visit and with the United Nations country team on the modalities of a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the protection of children's rights. The Government was fully committed to preventing the recruitment of children

under 18 into the armed forces. The age requirement was strictly enforced at military recruiting centres and training establishments.

40. Myanmar welcomed the emergence of new partnerships to enhance the global response to HIV/AIDS. A national committee had been established to coordinate efforts to combat the disease, including advocacy, awareness-raising and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Those activities were being carried out in collaboration with relevant ministries, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a result, the incidence of HIV/AIDS had decreased between 2000 and 2005. His Government was making every effort to build a world fit for children and called for increased international cooperation to help it to achieve its goals.

41. **Mr. Sow** (Senegal) said that the factors hindering the full development of children in Africa lay principally in the area of protection. People, particularly in rural communities, had a low level of awareness of children's rights. Many international agreements which had been ratified were poorly applied at the State level. Many families, faced with poverty, tended to use their daughters as a means of survival. Inadequate labour legislation governing the domestic work of children and the low level of information concerning domestic workers encouraged abuse of girls and young women. Harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation were major problems. Street children often fell prey to sex tourism, human trafficking and pornography or became involved in armed conflicts. Within that very vulnerable segment of society, children with disabilities were particularly exposed to abuse and sexual exploitation. Another vulnerable group was HIV/AIDS orphans, who had little or no access to health care.

42. Senegal had made significant advances in the area of the education, health and protection of the rights of children. It had been promoting maternal and child health through prenatal care in major urban centres and expanded vaccination and nutrition programmes. Concerning protection of the rights of the child, it had established a children's parliament, which offered children a good forum for expressing their interests. Legislation dating back to 2001 prohibited excision. Efforts were also being made to register children with the Public Records Office. The Government was taking steps to address child begging and modernize Koranic schools. It sought to increase awareness about national and international instruments concerning the rights of the child, harmonize national legislation with the relevant ratified international agreements, strengthen subregional protection against trafficking in children and eliminate the sexual abuse and exploitation of children. It was strengthening primary school education and vocational training. It was also tackling HIV/AIDS through its national programme in collaboration with development partners. The Government had taken robust action to address the problem of fistula, including free care and initiatives to prohibit forced marriages. It would be submitting a draft resolution on the issue, which it hoped would enjoy unanimous support.

43. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana) said that the forthcoming review of the commitments set out in the document entitled "A world fit for children" would surely create the momentum for a stronger response by Governments and other stakeholders to the challenges involved in achieving the goals set at the General Assembly special session on children.

44. His delegation welcomed the report by the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children, which had catalysed action at the global level. Ghana, which attached great importance to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, had developed various strategies to prevent all forms of violence against children. Some Governments, however, although committed to combating such violence, were handicapped by institutional weaknesses. Much more could be achieved if resource allocation were increased for activities relating to children.

45. His delegation commended the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the work of the Security Council in monitoring its resolution 1612 (2005). Collaborative efforts by all the individuals and bodies concerned, and by children themselves, had resulted in admirable advances, such as the introduction of child protection advisers to United Nations peacekeeping forces. It was, however, a cause for alarm that, in many situations of conflict, there remained a considerable distance between strict child protection standards and the actual situation of children on the ground. Rape was used as a weapon of war;

children, particularly girls, were the victims of sexual violence. Moreover, the climate of impunity was flourishing. In countries where the continuing recruitment of children was no longer a central issue, their reintegration in society remained problematic. The Special Representative's report highlighted emerging issues of concern, such as the security of camps for internally displaced persons and refugees, where children were most susceptible to recruitment and other serious violations of their rights. His delegation urged all States that had not already done so to sign and implement the relevant international instruments. The negative impact of armed conflict on children could not be underestimated and the international community must intensify its efforts to protect them and mitigate their suffering from the atrocities of war.

46. **Ms. Pi** (Uruguay) welcomed the fact that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols had been widely ratified. The virtue of the Convention was that it applied to every aspect of the life and development of children, recognizing their rights at the hands of the State and society. Such recognition inevitably had a bearing on all State activities. Public policy should thus give priority to children, establishing mechanisms to promote their development and mitigate the effects of economic or social restrictions. Her Government had amended existing legislation to that end and aimed to promote a concept of the child as a subject of law rather than a subject of State protection, with a view to encouraging greater involvement by children and the independent exercise of their rights.

47. Despite the progress that had been achieved, her delegation regretted that international plans to promote children's rights had not been accompanied by the necessary investment and that international aid flows were still too low for the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved. The international community should redouble its efforts to tackle the violence, exploitation and abuse suffered by children, various forms of child labour, the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and the particular vulnerability of children in poverty, in armed conflict and in natural disasters. In that connection, she paid a tribute to the work of UNICEF.

48. Her delegation welcomed the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and hoped that, given its sensitivity, the topic could be assessed in an inclusive and open manner, so that every country would have the opportunity to contribute its point of view. Her delegation also fully endorsed the recommendations contained in the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children. It was, however, concerned that, while some progress had been made in combating violence in educational establishments, trafficking in persons and sexual or commercial exploitation, the situation remained poor with regard to domestic violence, the treatment of victims in the hospitals and the courts or violence perpetrated by agents of the State. There could be no justification for any form of violence. Only through cooperation based on education and understanding would it be possible to bring about the necessary cultural and social changes. Confrontation and coercion led only to greater division and tension. The independent experts' study highlighted the terrible levels of violence suffered by children worldwide, which should be tackled by means of a multidisciplinary strategy operating at the national, regional and international level. Her delegation therefore fully supported the recommendation that a special representative on violence against children should be appointed, with a mandate that covered human rights, child protection, welfare, development, public health and education.

49. **Ms. Štiglic** (Slovenia) said that child protection was given priority in her country's foreign policy. Her delegation therefore welcomed a number of significant developments over the past few years, particularly with regard to the widespread ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the growing number of signatories to the two Optional Protocols and the ratification of a number of International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions. The fifth anniversary of the Optional Protocols must act as a catalyst for renewed efforts to promote and protect children's rights at every level. In that connection, her delegation supported the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children.

50. The work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and of her predecessor had achieved real progress. Important steps had also been taken in the fight against impunity, with the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which defined the recruitment of children to armed forces as a war crime.

In view of the impact of conflict on the psychological and social well-being of children, who were often displaced from their homes or separated from their families, the Government, the city of Ljubljana and the NGO Slovene Philanthropy had established the Together Foundation, which worked for the psychological and social rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflicts, post-war poverty or other negative social processes in the western Balkans, Iraq or the North Caucasus by strengthening local structures in the field. It was crucial that children should be reintegrated in their own communities.

51. **Mr. Prommoon** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that much had been achieved: child mortality rates had fallen, life expectancy had gone up and young people were more educated than ever before. The world in general had become a less violent place. The progress was, however, not fast enough. The way to speed up the process of change was to empower children and develop their rights. Like almost every other country, Thailand had acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols. Yet, in the face of the fact that young people accounted for half those unemployed in the world and half those newly infected with HIV/AIDS, promises must be matched by action.

52. If the Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality was not achieved by 2015, 4.6 million people would have been deprived of their right to life. It was the duty of the international community to provide children with basic services such as immunization, nutrition and sanitation. A strong family was also crucial to the development of adolescents. His Government had formulated a national youth policy for the years 2002-2011, emphasizing the role of the family.

53. Although young people were, by and large, better educated than ever, unequal access to education was still a glaring problem in many societies. Proper investment in education must be made in every country: the best way to advance a nation was by its possession of a large pool of people equipped with the moral consciousness of responsible citizenship, along with the requisite knowledge and skills. Greater investment was also needed to enable young people to get involved in the global economy. Entrepreneurial and vocational training was required. Access to microfinance should be provided.

54. Young people needed to be involved in the decision-making process. All States should therefore include youth delegates in their delegations to the General Assembly.

55. **Mr. Xhaferraj** (Albania) said that his Government, which had signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union in 2006, was striving to introduce and implement European Union standards, particularly with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was a crucial international document in that regard. New legislation or amendments to existing legislation had therefore been introduced in order to improve the living conditions and legal status of children in Albania. The Government had ratified the most important international instruments for the protection of children, including, most recently, the two Optional Protocols to the Convention.

56. In 2006, a study had been conducted on violence against children in Albania. The study had provided guidance to all the parties concerned on how to work with and for children. The National Strategy for Children, the National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings, the National Roma Strategy and the National Strategy for Social Services were being implemented and updated. Issues relating to the promotion and protection of human rights could not, however, be tackled by Government alone but required extensive consultation with and involvement by society at large. Government institutions had therefore established constructive cooperation with NGOs involved in children's rights. NGOs' contributions to the domestic human rights debate would enhance the protection of the rights of the children of Albania.

57. The Government cooperated with UNICEF and other specialized agencies in their work within the country and commended the efforts of the international community to promote and protect the rights of children worldwide. There was, however, an urgent need for existing capacities to be strengthened.

58. **Ms. Kavun** (Ukraine) said that violence against children bred societies that accepted the unacceptable: that children could be beaten, tortured or humiliated. No State was exempt. In Eastern Europe, poverty pushed more and more children on to the streets, where they faced appalling dangers, including gang violence,

child prostitution and drug abuse; yet about half of them were thought to be under 13. A disturbing gap remained between the standards and initiatives developed for the protection of children and the atrocities that were still perpetrated against children by parties to armed conflict.

59. Her Government was particularly concerned about the impact of the Chernobyl disaster on children's health, the spread of HIV/AIDS and trafficking in women and children. Policies regarding children had been significantly strengthened. Additional legislative and practical incentives had facilitated identifying appropriate activities for protecting the rights of children, including orphans and children deprived of parental care. A national programme for preventing children's homelessness and abandonment in the period 2006-2010 had started successfully. A national plan of action for implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the period 2006-2016 had been launched in 2007.

60. Ukraine took steps to eradicate trafficking in children, child prostitution and child pornography. Sexual exploitation was encouraged by economic factors. Street children, juvenile victims of domestic violence, orphans and the inmates of children's homes were most vulnerable. Accordingly, the best way of preventing children from trafficking was to strengthen the role of the family environment. Therefore the family should be protected and assisted.

61. The Ukrainian Government's efforts would not have been successful without assistance from foreign government authorities, the United Nations and other international bodies, funds, programmes and civil society organizations. Ukraine would continue to cooperate with UNICEF, the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), NGOs and civil society to ensure coherence and efficiency in the promotion of the rights of children. In 2006, the situation regarding exploited children in Ukraine had been assessed by the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

62. **Mr. Chabar** (Morocco) reiterated his Government's indignation at the plight of many children in the world. Every year, millions of children died as a result of malnutrition, disease, armed conflict, exploitation or violence or suffered as victims of trafficking, prostitution and pornography. Accordingly, Morocco had recently announced its adherence to the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups ("Paris Commitments"), which aimed at eliminating the recruitment of children by armed groups or forces. Moreover, Morocco had formulated a coherent strategy to promote the rights of children, with direct civil society involvement. In March 2006, his Government had adopted a national 2006-2015 plan of action for children. The plan provided for new monitoring mechanisms, creation of child protection units and organization of data-collection activities regarding the fulfilment of child-related commitments made during the United Nations General Assembly special session on children, held in 2002, and the attainment of the relevant Millennium Development Goals. Funds had been earmarked for groups combating violence against children and early marriage. Legal and psychological counselling units and shelters had been set up for women victims of violence. Specific programmes had been developed for child workers and street children and initiatives had been taken to combat illiteracy among rural girls.

63. Preventive and educational activities included a national programme for the promotion of a human rights culture in schools, a national campaign for education in equal rights at the high school level, measures for eradicating illiteracy among children aged 8-16, specific programmes targeting children in difficult situations and steps to improve the enrolment of school-age girls in rural areas. A human development initiative launched in May 2006 by King Mohammed VI comprehensively addressed poverty, social exclusion, resource mobilization and promotion of children's rights. Improving the lot of children required parallel action to eliminate poverty. Moreover, the family code had been amended better to reflect the interests of children, in the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Labour Code, under which the minimum employment age had been raised to 15, banned dangerous work for children under 18. Lastly, the Criminal Code had been reformed in 2003 to include provisions against various forms of sexual exploitation, raising the age of criminal responsibility to 18 and establishing special courts for minors.

64. **Ms. Asmady** (Indonesia) said that children's rights should be implemented as part of human rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, the Millennium Development Goals and the outcome of the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly. It was therefore encouraging that 193 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention, that a growing number of countries sought to achieve the goals contained in the document "A world fit for children" and that children's rights were one of the main thrusts of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Despite those advances and some tangible progress in the areas of health, education and human rights, the goals set in the various United Nations instruments were far from being fully accomplished. Rectifying that situation would require greater political resolve and investment. Developing countries should be able to rely on support from the international community. The financing commitments set out in the Monterrey Consensus must be fulfilled. Based on the findings of the Machel study, the international community should put greater effort into ending the recruitment of children.

65. The family was the primary source of care for children and should therefore be strengthened. To that end, building the economy and safeguarding economic stability had been priorities for Indonesia. The Indonesian Government continued to increase the annual budget for education with a view to providing quality instruction, and had developed operational assistance and scholarship programmes for poor students. The national education programme had raised the level of scholastic achievement. Access of poor communities to health services was improving. Inter alia, the Government had created a health insurance programme for the poor and helped to alleviate the costs of medicine. More medical personnel was assigned to isolated areas. However, high maternal mortality and the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS required greater efforts. Limited treatment capacity called for further support by the international community, including the provision of antiretroviral drugs.

66. Certain areas in Indonesia required particular attention. Indonesia intended to cooperate further with the international community in rehabilitating the Aceh province, which had been devastated by the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster in 2004. Indonesia also focused on the development of its eastern provinces. Current priorities included improving the food supply, promoting a community-based economy, providing adequate health and education services and expanding basic infrastructures.

67. Action with regard to children should comprise family-based prevention strategies to reduce violence against children, with an enhanced role for international cooperation and United Nations country programmes. Awareness should be further raised in the legislative and executive branches of Government, including through the use of the Inter-Parliamentary Union handbook entitled "Eliminating violence against children". Moreover, United Nations agencies should better coordinate their capacity-building activities to assist Governments in attaining the Millennium Development Goals and improving the condition of children. Partnerships among Governments, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations were essential. UNICEF's child protection support should address new challenges, such as natural disasters and climate change. Lastly, the General Assembly should take a more pro-active role on the issue of children and armed conflict.

68. **Ms. Almuhairy** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country had adopted a comprehensive development policy focused on the human being, particularly children and youth. The State had enacted legislation and taken measures in that spirit. Her country, keenly interested in contributing to international partnership, had launched in September 2007 the "Dubai Care" campaign, whose first phase aimed at securing education for 1 million children in developing countries, particularly in Asia and Africa.

69. At the national level, the parties concerned had signed in April 2007 an agreement to extend — with UNICEF cooperation — the programme on child jockeys to the United Arab Emirates, as part of the country's action to combat human trafficking. In the areas of promoting the well-being of children and protecting their rights, her country had managed to reduce the mortality rate for children under five to 8 per thousand, ensure that 95 per cent of children were immunized against childhood diseases and completely eradicate polio and malaria. The rate of enrolment in elementary schools for both sexes had attained 86 per cent. Social care was available for orphans and children of unknown parents. Up-to-date methods were applied to the rehabilitation of children with

disabilities and special needs. Those children were provided with medical, social and psychological care. Her country was one of the main centres for treating autism in the Middle East. Her Government had set up centres for protecting and assisting abused or neglected children and specialized units for reforming juvenile delinquents according to modern methods of rehabilitation and reintegration.

70. **Ms. Bungundu** (Nigeria) said that, despite reported improvement, her delegation was preoccupied with the situation of children affected by armed conflict. Concerted efforts by all agencies responsible for relevant dialogue, rehabilitation and reintegration were necessary to prevent abuse during and after the conflict.

71. In Nigeria, progress had been made towards the full incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law. Since the previous session of the General Assembly, six more federal states had ratified the Convention, and steps were being taken for its effective implementation. In dealing with HIV/AIDS, measures taken by the Nigerian Government in addition to the national plan of action for orphans and vulnerable children included cooperation with international development partners with a view to providing necessary services and care for affected and other vulnerable children.

72. Measures taken to prevent violence against children included building law-enforcement capacities appropriately to handle children in conflict with the law; setting up children's desks at police stations; mainstreaming child rights issues into the police training curriculum; establishing family courts; and providing voluntary services for young delinquents. The findings and recommendations of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children were broadly disseminated, while legislation on trafficking in persons had been amended to include provisions against child abuse and child labour. The competent ministries channelled savings from debt relief granted to Nigeria to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals related to children's rights.

73. **Mr. Buff** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that, although all children affected by armed conflict gave cause for concern, girls were particularly vulnerable to abuse because of their sex and age. Combatants could force them to cook, fetch water and firewood or clean for them. Moreover, girls were exposed to abduction, forced marriage, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. Since children were best protected by staying with their families, it was essential in times of war to protect the entire civilian population, and especially to keep families together.

74. ICRC activities to combat the recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups included making representations to all parties to a given conflict, raising awareness of international humanitarian law and other fundamental rules, contributing to the development of new humanitarian rules and providing direct services for children. ICRC welcomed the increased focus on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts both within the United Nations and among certain States and armed groups. It had participated in drafting the recently adopted Paris Commitments, which placed great emphasis on girls recruited or used by warring parties. ICRC expected many more States to adhere to the Paris Commitments; urged all States to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and to enforce its provisions; and hoped that international law would eventually include a total ban on all forms of recruitment — voluntary or involuntary — of persons under 18.

75. That children should suffer the effects of armed conflict and other situations of violence was a stain on humanity. ICRC was pleased to see that children were currently being demobilized, even in conflicts that had not yet been settled. However, although they often accounted for approximately 40 per cent of the children recruited, the percentage of girls benefiting from demobilization processes was much lower. Presumably, many remained behind as wives or to fulfil other domestic roles, and hence were not regarded as being child soldiers. Moreover, many girls who had managed to leave armed forces or groups did not wish to go through an official disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for fear of stigmatization. The plight of recruited girls should receive high priority.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.